

Book 1

**Mastering English
Grammar**

NOUNS
&
ADJECTIVES

David Moeller

NOUNS AND ADJECTIVES

Book 1 of the MASTERING ENGLISH GRAMMAR
Series

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION: *MASTERING ENGLISH GRAMMAR*

The nine titles in the *Mastering English Grammar* series can be subdivided into three books on the parts of speech, three on sentence structure, and three on punctuation:

Parts of Speech

- Book 1: *Nouns and Adjectives*
- Book 2: *Verbs and Adverbs*
- Book 3: *Pronouns, Prepositions, and Conjunctions*

Sentence Structure

- Book 4: *Subjects and Verbs*
- Book 5: *Compound Sentences*
- Book 6: *Complex Sentences*

Punctuation

- Book 7: *Commas*
- Book 8: *Semicolons and Colons*
- Book 9: *Parentheses, Brackets, Dashes, Ellipses, Italics, and Hyphens*

What sets this series apart from other grammar books is that instead of trying to include all that can be said on the topic of grammar (the data-dump approach), it focuses on those concepts that promise a higher return on investment (ROI). In other words, as much as possible, the books in this series aim to translate the study of grammar into more competent reading and writing.

The term *generative* refers to a study of grammar or rhetoric that helps us achieve in writing what we wouldn't have been able to achieve otherwise. Generative grammar is grammar at its most practical—it's grammar we can use. Such generative material has been sprinkled throughout the pages of the books in this series.

The nine books in this series constitute a writer's grammar. The *Mastering* that appears in the series title is not a reference to earning high scores on

grammar quizzes; instead, it refers to increasing our ability to understand the texts of others and to formulate words, phrases, and clauses while writing. Ultimately, we will want to use the knowledge we gain to *generate* more complex structures as we write.

All nine books in this series contain exercises (called *Your Turn*), a book-ending *Test Questions* section, and answers to all exercise and test questions.

Ultimately, the aim of each title is to equip you with some knowledge and some practical skills to add to your arsenal of writing strategies.

E-Book Vs. Print

Because the nine titles in the series contain exercises and test questions, a discussion of the difference between an e-book and a print book is really a discussion of writing out answers vs. working out answers in our heads. The e-books in this series are designed to accommodate the limitations of e-readers. For example, to reduce scrolling, answers follow immediately upon the heels of questions. When access to reference material—like word lists, for example—is necessary, that material will reappear in those places where it is needed.

Print versions, on the other hand, leave room for writing out answers or marking up text. And in the print versions, the answers are in the back of the book.

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK 1: NOUNS AND ADJECTIVES

Welcome to *Book 1: Nouns and Adjectives*, a book that teaches what we should know about two key parts of speech.

We use nouns to name the things in the world—in fact, the words *nouns*, *things*, and *world* are all nouns. We use adjectives to describe those things.

Here are three adjective-noun relationships.

- proper nouns
- precious things
- panoramic world

And because the relationship between adjectives and nouns is such a close one, they appear together here in this e-book.

This e-book is comprised of three chapters—a chapter on nouns, a chapter on adjectives, and a chapter containing test questions based on the material in Chapters 1 and 2.

Chapters 1 and 2 are divided into lessons, numbered 1.1, 1.2, etc. Each lesson concludes with a *Your Turn*—a practice exercise with which you can check your learning. For easy reference, a Glossary of Terms appears at the end of Chapter 1 and at the end of Chapter 2.

And with that, let's begin our study of nouns and adjectives.

Chapter 1: Nouns

Of the eight parts of speech, nouns and verbs take preeminence. Without nouns, the world would be an empty place—literally. We ourselves are nouns, and we find ourselves surrounded by other nouns.

In addition to naming the stuff we can own, admire, and stub our toes on, nouns also name abstract ideas and concepts. Of course, one of our primary goals in this chapter is to understand what a noun is. But to truly understand nouns we need to arrive at a broader understanding of what lies at the heart of all nouns—a quality we might call *nounness*.

This chapter begins by presenting five ways to identify nouns. From there, we move into word-level nouns: common nouns, proper nouns, possessive nouns, and nouns as objects of prepositions.

We then move from single words to phrases and clauses—word groups that perform the same function as single-word nouns: noun phrases, gerund phrases, appositives, and noun clauses.

Chapter 1 concludes with a glossary of terms. As you read, note that key, boldfaced terms are defined in the Glossary of Terms found at the end of each chapter.

Five Ways to Test for Nouns

In the first five lessons, we'll practice using these **five noun-testing methods**:

1. Nouns are persons, places, and things.
2. Nouns take number.
3. Nouns can be owned.
4. Nouns follow noun markers.
5. Nouns take noun suffixes.

Some of these tests won't work with all nouns; but with many nouns, all five tests can be applied. As you study the five ways to test for nouns, think of these five tests as five ways to understand the quality of *nounness*.

Lesson 1.1: Test 1: A Noun Is a Person, Place, or Thing

To apply Test 1, we simply name the **noun** (key, boldfaced terms appear in the chapter-ending Glossary of Terms) and explain why the word we've identified as a noun is a noun; in other words, we call that noun a person, a place, or a thing.

- My father raced me down the mountain.

In the sentence above, *father* is a person and therefore a noun; *mountain* is a thing and therefore a noun.

- Cheerfully, she sat with her sister.

In this sentence, *sister* is a person and therefore a noun.

Note: In *she sat with her sister*, the word *she* refers to a person and yet is not a noun. *She* is a pronoun. For fans of pronouns, that topic is covered in Book 3 of this series. But here in Book 1 we will focus on nouns and gloss over the appearance of pronouns.

YOUR TURN 1.1

Note: This being an e-book, the Your Turn exercises are intended to be done mentally. Answers to the Your Turn exercises follow the exercises.

In the sentences below, use the *person*, *place*, or *thing* test to identify nouns.

1. A man in a black gown read from a manuscript. (3 nouns)
2. The sailors explained the lightning to the child. (3 nouns)

ANSWERS 1.1

1. A **man** in a black **gown** read from a **manuscript**. [Man *is a person*; gown *is a thing*; manuscript *is a thing*.]
2. The **sailors** explained the **lightning** to the **child**. [Sailors *is a person*; lightning *is a thing*; child *is a person*.]

Lesson 1.2: Test 2: Nouns Take Number

To say that a noun takes **number** is to say that it can be **singular** or **plural**. In other words, there can be one or more than one of a noun. Here is the test phrase for determining if a word takes number and is therefore a noun:

- 1 NOUN, 2 NOUNS

Let's apply our test phrase to the following sentence:

- A prayer is on my lips.

In this sentence, the test phrase identifies *prayer* as a noun: 1 prayer, 2 prayers. As the word moves from singular (*prayer*) to plural (*prayers*), it changes form—it adds an -s.

The test phrase also identifies *lips* as a noun: 1 lip, 2 lips. We are not concerned with whether the noun as we find it is singular or plural; we are concerned only with whether it fits our test phrase. In the sentence above ...

- *prayer* is singular; to complete the test phrase, we supply the plural form *prayers*;
- *lips* is plural; we supply the singular form *lip*.

Now let's see if our test phrase *really* works by applying it to every word in the sentence *a prayer is on my lips*.

- *a*—1 a, 2 a's (doesn't work)
- *prayer*—1 prayer, 2 prayers (yes, a noun)
- *is*—1 is, 2 is's (doesn't work)
- *on*—1 on, 2 ons (doesn't work)
- *my*—1 my, 2 mys (doesn't work)
- *lips*—1 lip, 2 lips (yes, a noun)

Let's try our test for number one more time:

- A voice is less loud than the hearts that beat each to each. (Here, *beat* is a verb.)

By applying our test for number (singular/plural) to the words in the sentence above, we determine that the words *voice* and *hearts* are nouns: 1 voice, 2 voices; 1 heart, 2 hearts.

- A **voice** is less loud than the **hearts** that beat each to each.

This test will not work for *noncount* nouns. Noncount nouns have no plural form, so our test will not work for nouns such as *luggage*, *blood*, and *happiness*.

YOUR TURN 1.2

In the sentences below, use the test phrase for number (1 NOUN, 2 NOUNS) to identify the nouns.

1. Far into the night the singer hummed that tune. (3 nouns)
2. Pure, reflective moments still shine from the distant fences. (2 nouns)

ANSWERS 1.2

1. Far into the **night** the **singer** hummed that **tune**. [1 night, 2 nights; 1 singer, 2 singers; 1 tune, 2 tunes]
2. Pure, reflective **moments** still shine from the distant **fences**. [1 moment, 2 moments; 1 fence, 2 fences]

Lesson 1.3: Test 3: Nouns Can Be Owned

Nouns can be owned. Thus, words that indicate **possession**—such as **possessive nouns** or **possessive adjectives**—serve to **mark** nouns as nouns.

Let's use the noun *mustard*.

- **owned by a possessive noun:** Joe's mustard (*Joe's* is a possessive noun—*Joe* owns the mustard)
- **owned by a possessive adjective:** his mustard (*his* is a possessive adjective—*he* owns the mustard)

For our *it-can-be-owned* test, we will simply use the test phrase *my* NOUN.

Example:

- The ground is almost covered smooth in snow.

Using our test phrase for ownership, let's give the sentence above the complete, word-by-word treatment:

- my the (doesn't work)
- **my ground (yes, *ground* is a noun)**
- my is (doesn't work)
- my almost (doesn't work)
- my covered (doesn't work)
- my smooth (doesn't work)
- my in (doesn't work)
- **my snow (yes, *snow* is a noun)**

By using our test phrase for ownership, we determine that *ground* and *snow* are the two nouns in the sentence above.

- All are connected like the blood that unites one family.

This time we'll cut to the chase. In the sentence above, *blood* and *family* are nouns; these are things we can own: my blood, my family.

YOUR TURN 1.3

In the sentences below, use the test phrase for ownership to identify the nouns.

1. And now her lap is full of trees. (2 nouns)
2. Beneath these hands I feel the braids drawn up tight as a wire. (3 nouns)

ANSWERS 1.3

1. And now her lap is full of trees. [*my lap, my trees*]
2. Beneath these hands I feel the braids drawn up tight as a wire. [*my hands, my braids, my wire*]

Lesson 1.4: Test 4: Nouns Follow Noun Markers

Possessive nouns and pronouns are **noun markers**. Other noun markers are:

- **articles:** *a, an, the*
- **demonstrative pronouns:** *this, that, these, those, such*
- **quantifiers:** *all, few, many, more, most, several, some, every, each, any, no*
- **numbers:** *one, two, a hundred, first, second, last, next ...*

For our test phrase, we'll choose a simple noun marker—the article *the*. Since noun markers precede nouns, our simple test phrase will look like this:

- the NOUN.

A noun marker does not need to appear immediately next to the noun it marks. For example, in the phrase *the narrowest hinge*, the noun *hinge* is marked by the article *the*—though another word comes between them.

- Their feet step on silent stones and dry leaves.

By applying our noun marker test to the sentence above, we get this result:

- the their
- **the feet**
- the step
- the on
- the silent
- **the stones**
- the and
- the dry
- **the leaves**

Our noun marker test tells us that the sentence above contains the nouns *feet*, *stones*, and *leaves*. (Here, *step* is an action—a verb—not a noun.)

Once again:

- A few **weeds** and **stubble** show at last. (*show* is a verb)

This time our noun marker test identifies two nouns:

- the weeds
- the stubble

YOUR TURN 1.4

In the sentences below, use the noun marker test to identify the nouns.

1. Animals scatter and look for a safe shelter. (2 nouns)
2. But there were planes to catch and bills to pay. (2 nouns)

ANSWERS 1.4

1. **Animals** scatter and look for a safe **shelter**. [*the animals, the shelter*]
2. But there were **planes** to catch and **bills** to pay. [*the planes, the bills*]

Lesson 1.5: Test 5: Nouns Take Noun Suffixes

Suffixes are word parts that appear at the ends of words. Some suffixes turn non-nouns into nouns. Here are some examples of **noun suffixes**:

- *-ance / -ence*
- *-ary / -ery*
- *-er / -eer / -or*
- *-iac*
- *-ism*
- *-ist*
- *-ment*
- *-ness*
- *-om*
- *-sion / -tion*

Here are some examples of noun suffixes at work.

By adding the noun suffix *-ance* to the verb *accept*, we've created the noun *acceptance*.

- *accept* → *acceptance*

By adding the noun suffix *-ness* to the adjective *shy*, we've created the noun *shyness*.

- *shy* → *shyness*

YOUR TURN 1.5

In each word pair below, one of the two words ends with a noun suffix and is therefore a noun; the other is not. In each pair, identify the noun by identifying the noun suffix.

Example: Given a pair of words like *inflate* and *maniac*, we note that *maniac* ends with the noun suffix *-iac* and is therefore a noun.

1. describe / donation
2. softness / interrupt
3. movement / empty
4. obedient / obedience

ANSWERS 1.5

1. describe / **donation**
2. **softness** / interrupt
3. **movement** / empty
4. obedient / **obedience**

Testing for Nounness—Summary

We have looked at five noun tests:

1. A noun is a person, place, or thing.
2. Nouns can be singular or plural: 1 NOUN, 2 NOUNS.
3. Nouns can be owned: my NOUN.
4. Nouns follow noun markers: the NOUN.
5. Nouns take noun suffixes.

Again, not all tests will work with all nouns. However, the more tools we have at our disposal, the more likely we are to succeed at determining which words are nouns.

Lesson 1.6: Common Nouns Vs. Proper Nouns

Many of the things we encounter have both general and specific names. For example:

- **general name:** *father*; **specific name:** *Ed Wood*
- **general name:** *mountain*; **specific name:** *Mount Baldy*
- **general name:** *valley*; **specific name:** *San Fernando Valley*

In each of these examples, the general name is a **common noun**. The specific name is a **proper noun**.

As you can see in the examples above, common nouns begin with lower-case letters while proper nouns are capitalized.

With common nouns, nouns are single, individual words. Proper nouns, however, are an exception. For example, we would treat the two words *Ed Wood* as if they were a single noun.

- I am going to carry my bed into New York, complete with dangling sheets and ripped blankets.

The sentence above contains four nouns. Three of them—*bed*, *sheets*, *blankets*—are common nouns. *New York*, however, is a proper noun—the specific name of a city.

YOUR TURN 1.6

Identify the nouns contained in the three sentences below. For help with identifying the nouns, choose from among the five noun-identification methods we've learned. Also, determine whether each noun is a common or proper noun. Identifying proper nouns should be a simple task: the proper nouns are capitalized.

1. Drop to your knees like Christopher Smart the poet and kiss the earth. (3 common, 1 proper)
2. The wintry storm off the Atlantic shook the schoolhouse. (2 common, 1 proper)
3. The rocky land dips behind the residents of Lake Wobegon. (2 common, 1 proper)

ANSWERS 1.6

1. Drop to your knees like **Christopher Smart** the poet and kiss the earth.
2. The wintry storm off the **Atlantic** shook the schoolhouse.
3. The rocky land dips behind the residents of **Lake Wobegon**.

Lesson 1.7: Possessive Nouns

- The merchant's daughter was missing.
- We hear the drums' pounding in the middle of winter.
- Venus's son will never have to be a scullion slave.

Possession refers to ownership. In the examples above, the nouns *merchant*, *drums*, and *Venus* all own something: the daughter belongs to the merchant, the pounding belongs to the drums, and the son belongs to Venus.

Note that these three example sentences provide us with three different configurations of the possessive:

- *The merchant's daughter* gives us the apostrophe + –s ending.

This is the common method for forming possession.

- *The drums' pounding* gives us the –s + apostrophe ending.

This word ending is used to indicate the **plural possessive**: more than one drum is doing the possessing.

- *Venus's son* gives us the –s + apostrophe + –s ending.

Our spelling should match our pronunciation: we say *Vee-nuh-sez*.

Clinging to an overly literal definition of *possession* interferes with our ability to understand grammatical possession. The concept of possession encompasses broader relationships than the obvious example of a person holding a receipt at a checkout counter. It also includes more abstract notions like *tomorrow's dreams*.

Possessive nouns stand with one foot in noun territory and the other in adjective territory—they are nouns that *function* as adjectives, as seen in the examples below.

- I will not map him the route to the man's door.
- I will not map him the route to the yellow door.

In each of the two sentences above, the underlined word provides descriptive information about the noun *door*. In other words, the underlined words function as adjectives. Like the true adjective *yellow*, the possessive noun *man's* is doing the work of an adjective.

YOUR TURN 1.7

Identify the nouns contained in the three sentences below. For help with identifying the nouns, choose from among the five noun-identification methods we've learned. Also, determine which of the nouns is possessive. Identifying possessive nouns should be a simple task: the possessive nouns contain apostrophes.

1. I met a lady in the meadows, full beautiful, a fairy's child. (4 nouns, 1 of them possessive)
2. None saw their spirits' shadows shake the grass. (3 nouns, 1 of them possessive)
3. Who can believe John Keats's story about corpulent Cortez? (3 nouns, 1 of them possessive)

ANSWERS 1.7

1. I met a lady in the meadows, full beautiful, a **fairy's** child.
2. None saw their **spirits'** shadows shake the grass.
3. Who can believe **John Keats's** story about corpulent Cortez?

Lesson 1.8: Nouns as Objects of Prepositions

Prepositional phrases begin with prepositions and end with nouns or pronouns. Here is a list of some common prepositions:

- *above, across, against, among, at, before, behind, below, between, by, down, except, for, from, in, into, like, of, on, past, since, through, to, under, until, with*

And here are some examples of prepositional phrases:

- **down** the mountain
- **in** a black gown
- **from** a manuscript

In each of these prepositional phrases, the preposition is boldfaced and the noun at the end of the phrase is underlined. We call these phrase-ending nouns **objects of the preposition**.

- In *down the mountain*, *mountain* is the object of the preposition *down*.
- In *in a black gown*, *gown* is the object of the preposition *in*.
- In *from a manuscript*, *manuscript* is the object of the preposition *from*.

Identifying prepositional phrases is a simple task. First we find the preposition; then we scan to the right till we come to a noun or pronoun.

- Their feet step **on** silent stones.

In the example above, we start with the preposition *on*. That is the phrase's left-hand word. For the right-hand word, we scan to the right till we hit a noun—*stones*. *On silent stones* is the prepositional phrase, ending with the object *stones*.

YOUR TURN 1.8

Identify the nouns in the sentences below. Determine which of those nouns are serving as the objects of a preposition. To assist you with your task, the list of prepositions reappears below:

- **prepositions:** *above, across, against, among, at, before, behind, below, between, by, down, except, for, from, in, into, like, of, on, past, since, through, to, under, until, with*

1. Cheerfully, she sat with her sisters. (1 noun)
2. We explained the lightning to the children. (2 nouns)
3. Far into the night he whistled that tune. (2 nouns)
4. Pure, self-absorbed moments still reflect from the fences. (2 nouns)

ANSWERS 1.8

In the answers below, prepositions are boldfaced and nouns are underlined.

1. Cheerfully, she sat [**with** her sisters]. [*“Sisters” is the object of the preposition “with.”*]
2. We explained the lightning [**to** the children]. [*“Children” is the object of the preposition “to.” “Lightning” is also a noun.*]
3. Far [**into** the night] he whistled that tune. [*“Night” is the object of the preposition “into.” “Tune” is also a noun.*]
4. Pure, self-absorbed moments still reflect [**from** the fences]. [*“Fences” is the object of the preposition “from.” “Moments” is also a noun.*]

Lesson 1.9: Noun Phrases

Except for the occasional proper noun, the nouns we have been studying have been basic, one-word nouns.

At this point, however, we'll turn our study to entire groups of words that work together as if the group of words were a single-word noun. This is where our sense of *nounness* comes into play. Here in this lesson, we will study how an entire word group can exhibit the qualities of nounness.

Here is an example of a sentence containing a **noun phrase**:

- We will all keep still for once on the **face** of the **earth**.

In our work so far, we have been viewing sentences as collections of individual words; we've been looking through a **single-word lens**. Using a single-word lens, we identify two nouns in the sentence above: *face* and *earth*.

But to understand noun phrases, we'll need to switch our viewing lens to a **multiple-words lens**. With our multiple-words lens, we note that the five words *the-face-of-the-earth* blend together to name one single thing. Together, these five words create a noun phrase—a group of words that names a single person, place, or thing. Using Test 1 (from Lesson 1.1) we determine that *the face of the earth* is a thing and therefore a noun.

- We will all keep still for once on the face of the earth.

Since nouns are persons, places, and things, we can use the words *SOMETHING* and *SOMEONE* to test for noun phrases. (*SOMEWHERE* can also be used, but with less frequency.)

Example:

- We will all keep still for once on the face of the earth.
- We will all keep still for once on SOMETHING.

We'll call this method for identifying noun phrases **the SOMETHING test**. If the word group is interchangeable with *SOMETHING* (or *SOMEONE* or *SOMEWHERE*), it's functioning as a noun.

Another example:

- It is carried over the rough surface of other lives like the spoiled children of sultans of old in quilted chairs.
- **apply the SOMETHING test:** It is carried over SOMETHING like SOMEONE in SOMETHING.

By using our test words, we determine that:

- *the rough surface of other lives* is a 6-word noun phrase;
- *the spoiled children of sultans of old* is a 7-word noun phrase;
- *quilted chairs* is a 2-word noun phrase.

One more example:

- As soon as the generals and the politicians can predict the motions of your mind, you should lose it.
- **apply the SOMETHING test:** As soon as SOMEONE can predict SOMETHING, you should lose it.

Here, our test identifies *the generals and the politicians* and *the motions of your mind* as noun phrases.

YOUR TURN 1.9

Identify the noun phrases in the following sentences by applying the SOMETHING test: determine which word groups can be replaced by the test words SOMETHING or SOMEONE.

1. The truth must dazzle gradually or every man would lose his sight. (3 noun phrases, each of them 2 words long)
2. Bonnie and Clyde never confronted their real lives, but went on with their false ones. (3 noun phrases, each of them 3 words long)
3. Brother Lawrence was angered by the decision, tossing his omelets for the people of the village. (4 noun phrases: 2 words, 2 words, 2 words, and 5 words)
4. He refuses to consider a woman in a wheelchair or these broken voices of sorrow. (2 noun phrases, each of them 5 words long)

ANSWERS 1.9

1. The truth (SOMETHING) must dazzle gradually or every man (SOMEONE) would lose his sight (SOMETHING).
2. Bonnie and Clyde (SOMEONE) never confronted their real lives (SOMETHING), but went on with their false ones (SOMETHING).
3. Brother Lawrence (SOMEONE) was angered by the decision (SOMETHING), tossing his omelets (SOMETHING) for the people of the village (SOMEONE).
4. He refuses to consider a woman in a wheelchair (SOMEONE) or these broken voices of sorrow (SOMETHING).

Lesson 1.10: Gerunds and Gerund Phrases

A **gerund** is a verb used as a noun. All gerunds are *-ing* words.

- SOMETHING makes an excellent antidote for having worked too much.

In the sentence above, we know that whatever can take the place of SOMETHING must function as a noun. In this case, we can take a verb—*playing*—and by placing that verb in the noun position, we’ve created a one-word gerund:

- SOMETHING makes an excellent antidote for having worked too much.
- Playing makes an excellent antidote for having worked too much.

By adding words to a one-word gerund, we create a **gerund phrase**:

- SOMETHING will not win you many admirers.
- Playing the tuba in the rain will not win you many admirers.

Because it passes the SOMETHING test and because it begins with an *-ing* word (a word that has been borrowed from the verb family), we know that *playing the tuba in the rain* is a gerund phrase.

Because gerund phrases function as nouns, they can appear as the objects of prepositions:

- By playing the tuba in the rain, you are showing your dedication to the instrument.

In the sentence above, the gerund phrase *playing the tuba in the rain* functions as the object of the preposition *by*.

Note that the noun tests we learned in Lessons 1.1 through 1.5 work just as well with word groups—like noun phrases, for example—as with single words. Another of the noun tests we might use to identify noun phrases is the *nouns can be owned* test.

- Your playing the tuba in the rain is something we will not soon forget.

Here, *playing the tuba in the rain* is owned by the possessive adjective *your*, which tells us that the underlined word group functions as a noun, which tells us that the underlined word group is a gerund phrase.

YOUR TURN 1.10

Above, you were shown several ways to identify the gerund phrases. Use one or more of these methods to identify the gerund phrases in the following sentences.

1. Walking through the park near your home is good for your mental health. (1 gerund phrase, 7 words long)
2. Robert enjoyed picking apples from his two-pointed ladder. (1 gerund phrase, 7 words long)
3. Wallace's lying in his bed all day seems like laziness to those who know him. (1 gerund phrase, 6 words long)
4. The highlight of our trip was the sax player's droning of his drowsy, syncopated tune. (1 gerund phrase, 6 words long)

ANSWERS 1.10

1. [**Walking** through the park near your home] is good for your mental health. [*SOMETHING is good for your mental health.*]
2. Robert enjoyed [**picking** apples from his two-pointed ladder]. [*Robert enjoyed SOMETHING.*]
3. Wallace's [**lying** in his bed all day] seems like laziness to those who know him. [*Wallace's SOMETHING seems like laziness to those who know him.*]
4. The highlight of our trip was the sax player's [**droning** of his drowsy, syncopated tune]. [*The highlight of our trip was the sax player's SOMETHING.*]

Lesson 1.11: Appositives

An **appositive** is a noun or noun phrase that renames an original noun or noun phrase. In the examples that follow, the appositives are underlined; the nouns being renamed by the appositives (we'll call these *antecedents*) are boldfaced.

Example:

You begin **the Hokey-Pokey**, a mad gyration, as your hips engage in a wanton swirl.

In this example, we use a noun (in this case, a noun phrase) to name something: *the Hokey-Pokey*. Then we create another noun (usually a noun phrase) to give an alternate name to the original noun: *a mad gyration*. So in this example, the appositive *a mad gyration* renames *the Hokey-Pokey*.

Another example:

- This isn't a football, it's **a shoe**, a man's brown leather oxford.

In this example, the appositive *a man's brown leather oxford* renames *a shoe*.

Note that appositives are equal to the things they rename. For this reason, we could write the noun-plus-appositive this way:

- a shoe = a man's brown leather oxford

Another example:

- **Julia Butterfly**, the young woman who lived up in a tree for two years, hoped to save the life of Luna.

Note that appositives are often longer than the nouns they rename, as in the example above.

YOUR TURN 1.11

Identify the appositives—and the original nouns or noun phrases being renamed—in the following sentences.

1. I'd need a different pace, a slower one, to observe the growth of its branches and its leaves as they open. (1 appositive, 3 words long)
2. Leave it as a sign to mark the false trail, the way you didn't go. (1 appositive, 5 words long)
3. The lion gives you his roar, the voice to speak out and be heard. (1 appositive, 8 words long)
4. Standing at the open door, the sculptor, a warlock, drops penny candies into their bags. (1 appositive, 2 words long)

ANSWERS 1.11

1. I'd need a different **pace**, a slower one, to observe the growth of its branches and its leaves as they open.
2. Leave it as a sign to mark the false **trail**, the way you didn't go.
3. The lion gives you his **roar**, the voice to speak out and be heard.
4. Standing at the open door, the **sculptor**, a warlock, drops penny candies into their bags.

Lesson 1.12: Noun Clauses

How are **noun clauses** different from the noun phrases we looked at earlier? A **clause** contains a subject and a verb; a **phrase** does not.

- **noun phrase:** the daisies behind the house (does not contain a subject and verb)
- **noun clause:** why George slept in the daisies behind the house (contains the subject *George* and the verb *slept*)

When we add one of the following words (**noun clause markers**) to the front of a sentence, we create a noun clause:

- *that, if, whether*
- [words that can be used to create questions] *how, what, when, where, whom, why*
- [the *–ever* words] *however, whatever, whenever, wherever, whichever, whoever, whomever*

In the examples that follow, note how our SOMETHING, SOMEONE, and SOMEWHERE test words work once again—this time by identifying noun clauses:

- SOMETHING is a fact I cannot live with.
- **That people are trying to rob me of my name** is a fact I cannot live with.
[The clause contains the subject “people” and the verb “are trying.”]

Once again, a noun clause is a sentence with one of the words from the three bulleted lists above added to the front. Let’s see how this works:

We start with a sentence: *people are trying to rob me of my name*

We add a noun clause marker from our list: **that**

The result is a noun clause: **that people are trying to rob me of my name**

Another example:

- Contemporary zealots prove much more proficient at denouncing SOMEONE.
- Contemporary zealots prove much more proficient at denouncing **whomever they choose to call warmakers**. (The clause contains the

subject they and the verb choose.)

Another example:

- That morning I knew SOMETHING.
- That morning I knew **that** I had to do the only thing I could do. (*The clause contains the subject I and the verb had.*)

YOUR TURN 1.12

Identify the **noun clauses** in the sentences below. To assist you in your task, the list of **noun clause markers** reappears below:

- *that, if, how, what, when, where, whether whom, why, however, whatever, whenever, wherever, whichever, whoever, whomever*
1. The ants follow wherever the gulch turns them. (Use the test word SOMEWHERE; the noun clause is 5 words long.)
 2. Were he not gone, the woodchuck could say whether it's like hibernation or just some human sleep. (Use the test word SOMETHING; the noun clause is 9 words long.)
 3. Don't you remember how we plotted our lives together? (Use the test word SOMETHING; the noun clause is 6 words long.)
 4. Whoever is going to shatter them hasn't arrived yet. (Use the test word SOMEONE; the noun clause is 6 words long.)

ANSWERS 1.12

1. The ants follow **wherever** the gulch turns them. [*The ants follow SOMEWHERE.*]
2. Were he not gone, the woodchuck could say **whether** it's like hibernation or just some human sleep. [*Were he not gone, the woodchuck could say SOMETHING.*]
3. Don't you remember **how** we plotted our lives together? [*Don't you remember SOMETHING?*]
4. **Whoever** is going to shatter them hasn't arrived yet. [*SOMEONE hasn't arrived yet.*]

Nouns—Glossary of Terms

antecedent of an appositive: The noun or noun phrase being renamed by an appositive. If the noun *shoe* were being renamed by the appositive *a man's brown leather oxford*, *shoe* would be the antecedent of *a man's brown leather oxford*.

appositive: A noun or noun phrase that renames an original noun or noun phrase. Given a noun like *shoe*, we can create an appositive like *a man's brown leather oxford* to rename the shoe.

clause: A word group containing a subject and verb.

common noun: The more generic, non-specific level of noun. Words like *boss*, *planet*, and *restaurant* are common nouns. Common nouns are not capitalized.

five noun-testing methods: (1) A noun is a person, place, or thing. (2) Nouns take number—they can be singular or plural—test phrase: 1 NOUN, 2 NOUNS. (3) Nouns can be owned—test phrase: my NOUN. (4) Nouns follow noun markers—test phrase: the NOUN. (5) Nouns take noun suffixes. Examples: *-ance/-ence*; *-ary/-ery*; *-er/-eer/-or*; *-iac*; *-ism*; *-ist*; *-ment*; *-ness*; *-om*; *-sion/-tion*.

gerund: A verb used as a noun. Words like *playing* and *picking* can function as gerunds.

gerund phrase: A noun phrase consisting of a gerund plus added words. Phrases like *playing the tuba in the rain* and *lying in his bed all day* function as gerund phrases.

mark: To reveal information about a nearby word or word group. For example, in the phrase *my patience*, the possessive adjective *my* marks the following word *patience* as a noun. Words that mark nouns are called *noun markers*.

multiple-words lens: Using the multiple-word lens, we see sentences as collections of word groups rather than as a series of single words. When we identify noun phrases and noun clauses (rather than single-word nouns), we are looking at language through a multiple-word lens.

noun: One of the eight parts of speech. Nouns can be identified using one or more of the tests listed under *five noun-testing methods*.

noun clause: A word group that functions as a noun and that contains a subject and a verb. *How we plotted our lives together* is a noun clause. If placed into a sentence, these six words would function as a single noun. Also, the subject and verb *we plotted* is contained within the noun clause.

noun marker: Possessive nouns, possessive adjectives, articles, demonstrative pronouns, quantifiers, and numbers can all serve as noun markers. Noun markers sit to the left of nouns. *The* is a noun marker, so when we see *the* *WORD*, we know that the *WORD* to the right of *the* is a noun. (However, words like adjectives can intervene between noun markers and nouns.)

noun phrase: A group of words that functions as a single-word noun. Examples of noun phrases: *the face of the earth* (five words naming one thing); *the rough surface of other lives* (six words naming one thing).

noun suffix: A word part (an ending) that, when added to a word, turns that word into a noun. Some noun suffixes are *-ance/-ence*, *-ary/-ery*, *-er/-eer/-or*, *-iac*, *-ism*, *-ist*, *-ment*, *-ness*, *-om*, and *-sion/-tion*.

number: *Number* is a characteristic of nouns. To say that *nouns take number* is simply to say that they can be singular or plural—there can be one or more than one of a noun.

object of a preposition: Nouns serve as objects of prepositions—words on the right side of prepositional phrases that terminate prepositional phrases. In these examples, the nouns serving as objects of prepositions are underlined: *down the mountain*, *in a black gown*, *from a manuscript*.

phrase: A word group containing less than a subject and verb: just a subject, just a verb, or neither.

plural: More than one of a noun. *Lips*, *nights*, and *voices* are plural nouns. *Plural* is the opposite of *singular*.

plural possessive: With plural possessive nouns, we place the possessive apostrophe to the right of the final *-s*. In the phrase *players' meeting*, the noun *players'* is both plural and possessive. It is plural because there is more than one player; it is possessive because the players *own* the meeting.

possession: Ownership. Nouns with apostrophe + –s (*cow's*) and possessive adjectives (*her*) show possession.

possessive adjective: A pronoun that shows ownership, such as *my*, *your*, *his*, and *her*.

possessive noun: A noun that shows ownership, such as *team's*, *Joe's*, and *players'*.

proper noun: The more specific name for a thing—words like *Charles*, *Neptune*, and *Taco Bell* are proper nouns. Proper nouns are capitalized.

single-word lens: A way of looking at written language that accounts for every word, one word at a time. When we label the part of speech of each word in a passage, we are looking at language through a single-word lens.

singular: One of a noun. *Lip*, *night*, and *voice* are singular nouns. *Singular* is the opposite of *plural*.

SOMETHING test: A way of identifying nouns, noun phrases, and noun clauses. Whatever can be replaced by SOMETHING, SOMEONE, or SOMEWHERE is a noun.

Chapter 2: Adjectives

Emu is a noun. But not all emus are the same. If a friend asked us to see if his lost emu had been taken in by the local zoo, we would want to know a little bit more about this emu before making the trip. Is it *old*? *young*? *large*? *small*? *male*? *female*? *aggressive*? *tame*? *colorful*? *dull*? Knowing some details about the lost emu would help us identify the particular emu we were looking for.

This is where adjectives come in. Adjectives describe nouns. The emu we are looking for might be *adorable*, *alert*, *angry*, *blue*, *sleepy*, *tame*, *tired*, or *wet*. Each of these words is an adjective—each word could be used to describe the lost emu.

Most of us have heard the phrase “adjectives modify nouns.” *Modify*, however, may not be the best word to name what adjectives do, but it does make sense. We begin with an image of a generic emu. By adding the adjective *small* in front of the word *emu*, we’ve *modified* our mental image. By adding the adjective *proud*, we’ve modified our image once again.

Adjectives take larger groups and reduce them to smaller groups. In its adjectiveless form, the noun *emu* gives us a group of about 700,000. By adding the adjective *striped*, we’ve reduced that larger group to a smaller group. By adding the adjective *hungry*, we’ve reduced that group once again.

In this chapter, we’ll begin by learning to identify basic adjectives and the positioning of adjectives within a sentence. Along the way, we’ll visit proper, predicate, compound, hyphenated, counting, comparative, and superlative adjectives—as well as nouns and possessives used as adjectives. We’ll then move beyond the single-word lens and begin looking through a multiple-word lens. We’ll study how participial phrases and relative clauses perform the same function as single-word adjectives. We’ll conclude with a Glossary of Terms. Remember that key, boldfaced terms can be found in the chapter-ending glossary.

Whatever job it is that adjectives are performing—whether its describing, modifying, or reducing larger groups—that job is always done in relationship with nouns. So having finished our study of nouns, we can now launch into

our study of adjectives—the words that work in tandem with nouns.

Lesson 2.1: Basic Adjectives

An adjective's goal is to describe a noun, and there are various approaches an adjective can take to meet this goal. We'll begin here in Lesson 2.1 with an introduction to the **basic adjective**. In its simplest configuration, we find basic adjectives sitting to the left of the nouns they describe.

Some examples:

- And suddenly the rock has an open **wound**. [Adjectives are underlined; the nouns they describe are boldfaced—here and throughout.]

The adjective *open* describes the noun *wound*. What kind of wound? An *open* wound.

- A silver **spoon** from my childhood has returned unexpectedly.

The adjective *silver* describes the noun *spoon*. What kind of spoon? A *silver* spoon.

- The lovely **grain** of the crushed **petals** was gathered long ago.

The adjective *lovely* describes the noun *grain* and the adjective *crushed* describes the noun *petals*. What kind of grain? *Lovely* grain. What kind of petals? *Crushed* petals.

Note that in these examples, we are focusing on adjective-noun pairs only. Once we've identified an adjective-noun word pair, we can see how the two words work together in tandem with the left-hand adjective describing the right-hand noun.

One more example:

- Her cheeks regained their rosy **color**.

What kind of cheeks? *Rosy* cheeks.

Note on the articles *a*, *an*, and *the*: The three articles are considered adjectives. And they do tell us something about nouns: *a* and *an* tell us the noun is not specific; *the* calls our attention to a single instance of a noun; with *the*, the speaker and the listener know which specific instance of a noun is being spoken of. Consider the difference between *a car* and *the car*. However, because the articles are so common and because the work they do

is not really *descriptive* work, we will be ignoring the three articles as we discuss adjectives.

YOUR TURN 2.1

Identify the adjective-noun word pairs in the following sentences. Each sentence contains one adjective-noun word pair.

1. Then came the doctor who stole from Vess her second sight.
2. The day is a poem like one of Jeffers, crusted with blood and barbaric omens.
3. Back then we called it collateral damage and will again.
4. The seeds of hatred are planted in forsaken places.
5. We flinch from nothing, not from a single blow.

ANSWERS 2.1

1. Then came the doctor who stole from Vess her second **sight**.
2. The day is a poem like one of Jeffers, crusted with blood and barbaric omens.
3. Back then we called it collateral **damage** and will again.
4. The seeds of hatred are planted in forsaken **places**.
5. We flinch from nothing, not from a single **blow**.

Lesson 2.2: Suffixes

In Chapter 1 we learned that some nouns earn their nounhood by virtue of their **suffixes**. In the same way, some adjectives can be identified by *their* suffixes.

Note that in many cases the suffix is what creates the adjective to begin with. For example, the word *accept* is a verb. But when we add the adjective suffix *–able* to the verb, we get the adjective *acceptable*. In other words, these suffixes are both *adjective marking* and *adjective forming*.

Here is a list of some common **adjective suffixes**:

- *–able / –ible* (acceptable, audible)
- *–al* (autobiographical, beneficial)
- *–an / –ian* (American, vegetarian)
- *–en* (barrenen, brokenen)
- *–ful* (careful, cheerful)
- *–ic* (chronic, classic)
- *–ive* (consecutive, conservative)
- *–less* (cordless, countless)
- *–ous* (curious, curvaceous)
- *–y* (creepy, crumy)

Another example:

Consider the word *beat*, which has its roots in the verb family; it's an action, something we can do. But when we add an adjective-marking suffix to the word's end, we've turned that word into an adjective.

- The heart is a beatable tool.

Here, the adjective *beatable* describes the noun *tool*.

YOUR TURN 2.2

Identify the adjectives and the nouns being described by those adjectives. In addition, identify the adjective-marking suffix that appears at the end of each adjective.

Each sentence contains one adjective-noun combination.

For convenience, the suffixes reappear here:

- *-able/-ible; -al; -an/-ian; -en; -ful; -ic; -ive; -less; -ous; -y*

1. In the taxi I placed it onto a floral hankie.
2. It captures that moment when you dare to walk through an invisible wall into a new life.
3. My language is beautifully made for exploring the miraculous event.
4. Not every seed finds barren soil.
5. They walk beyond the leafless trees that the wind has laid bare.

ANSWERS 2.2

Here, only the adjective's suffix is underlined.

1. In the taxi I placed it onto a florall **hankie**.
2. It captures that moment when you dare to walk through an invisible **wall** into the life you had hoped for.
3. My language is beautifully made for exploring the miraculous **event**.
4. Not every seed finds barrene **soil**.
5. They walk beyond the leafless **trees** that the wind has laid bare.

Lesson 2.3: Proper Adjectives

In Lesson 1.6 we learned that proper nouns are specific names for more general nouns (common nouns) and that proper nouns are capitalized. What we learned about proper nouns is also true of **proper adjectives**.

Some examples:

- These Hollywood **writers** might be of use.

The proper adjective *Hollywood* describes the noun *writers*.

- Esteban the sculptor rolled tortillas with the fingertips of Puerto Rican **cigar makers**.

The proper adjective *Puerto Rican* describes the noun phrase *cigar makers*.

- In Japan, the pictures of oxen in the Buddhist **tradition** represent this teaching.

The proper adjective *Buddhist* describes the noun *tradition*.

Note that certain adjective-marking suffixes help us to create proper adjectives—suffixes such as the *-an* suffix in *Puerto Rican* and the *-ist* suffix in *Buddhist*.

YOUR TURN 2.3

In the following sentences, identify the proper adjectives and the nouns being described by those proper adjectives. Each sentence contains one adjective-noun combination. Three of the four proper adjectives are marked by adjective-marking suffixes.

1. I love American newspapers, the way each section is folded independently and believes it owns the world.
2. And what a Torah scroll takes a year to do, I do each day in haste or in nights without sleep.
3. Where the rabbit had escaped, the squirrel upped the ante by climbing into a new Euclidian plane.
4. The Olympian bards who sang their divinity will always find us young and always keep us so.

ANSWERS 2.3

1. I love American **newspapers**, the way each section is folded independently and believes it owns the world. [*Note the “-an” adjective-marking suffix*]
2. And what a Torah **scroll** takes a year to do, I do each day in haste or in nights without sleep.
3. Where the rabbit had escaped, the squirrel upped the ante by climbing into a new Euclidian **plane**. [*Note the “-ian” adjective-marking suffix*]
4. The Olympian **bards** who sang their divinity will always find us young and always keep us so. [*Note the “-ian” adjective-marking suffix*]

Lesson 2.4: Predicate Adjectives

The adjectives we've studied so far appear to the left of the nouns they describe. However, in certain sentence structures, adjectives are given permission to roam—all the way over to the right side of the noun being described.

Linking verbs are verbs that allow adjectives to move to the right of the nouns they describe. Adjectives that do appear to the right of the nouns they describe are known as **predicate adjectives**. (The term *predicate* refers to the words containing the verb and whatever follows the verb—in other words, the right side of a sentence.)

The linking verbs that allow adjectives to appear to the right are words such as *is, am, are, was, were, appears, becomes, feels, grows, looks, seems, smells, sounds, tastes*.

In addition to the underlined adjectives and boldfaced nouns, we will now add some typography: linking verbs will appear in small caps.

- Their **faces** ARE red from the effort.

Here, the predicate adjective *red* describes the noun *faces* with the help of the linking verb *are*. Note that the relationship between the adjective and the noun is the same. We could just as easily construct a sentence in which the adjective *red* sits to the left of the noun *faces*. In the sentence above, *red* is performing this same descriptive work on the noun *faces*—but from a further distance away.

- For when they saw **we** WERE fearful, how knowingly they played on our fears.

The predicate adjective *fearful* describes the pronoun *we* with the help of the linking verb *were*. (Adjectives can describe pronouns from the right side, as in this example, but not from the left. We do not say *fearful we*.)

- For a time **Lars** rests in the grace of the world and is free.

The predicate adjective *free* describes the noun *Lars* with the help of the linking verb *is*. In this case, note how the predicate adjective *free* travels quite a way to do its descriptive work.

YOUR TURN 2.4

In the following sentences, identify the adjectives, the nouns or pronouns being described, and the linking verbs used to link the adjectives to the nouns. Here, once again, are the linking verbs:

- *is, am, are, was, were, appears, becomes, feels, grows, looks, seems, smells, sounds, tastes.*
1. Her parents are distressed.
 2. Her face is quiet for one so young.
 3. They sniff the air and the air seems ominous.
 4. Traveling sounds wonderful to those who are downhearted.
 5. There are instances, however, in which doublespeak becomes amusing.

ANSWERS 2.4

1. Her **parents** ARE distressed.
2. Her **face** IS quiet for one so young.
3. They sniff the air and the **air** SEEMS ominous.
4. **Traveling** SOUNDS wonderful to those who are downhearted.
5. There are instances, however, in which **doublespeak** BECOMES amusing.

Lesson 2.5: Compound Adjectives

So far our study of adjectives has focused on single adjectives. We will now turn our attention to **compound adjectives**. Compound adjectives can be written with commas or with a conjunction—usually the conjunction *and*.

Examples:

- All about them whistles the cold and familiar **wind**.
- All about them whistles the cold, familiar **wind**.

The compound adjectives *cold* and *familiar* describe the noun *wind*. Note in this example—and in the following examples—how the conjunction (*and*) and the comma are interchangeable.

The two adjectives (*cold* and *familiar*) do their descriptive work independently of one another. What kind of wind? *Cold* wind. What kind of wind? *Familiar* wind.

- They ate from chipware on plain and creaking **wood**.
- They ate from chipware on plain, creaking **wood**.

The compound adjectives *plain* and *creaking* describe the noun *wood*.

- My daughter's wet and fragrant **hair** curls against the comb.
- My daughter's wet, fragrant **hair** curls against the comb.

The compound adjectives *wet* and *fragrant* describe the noun *hair*.

YOUR TURN 2.5

For each of the following, identify the compound adjectives and the noun being described. Some of the compound adjectives are joined by commas, some by the conjunction *and*.

1. The strange and beautiful dream led me on and on through the canyon walls.
2. The round, wooden boat bobs in the waters like a cherry.
3. Life in these identical and cramped rooms is like life in a filing cabinet.
4. The falling bird gives energy to the passive and still elements.
5. The stretchy, pliable willow is appropriately named.

ANSWERS 2.5

1. The strange and beautiful **dream** led me on and on through the canyon walls.
2. The round, wooden **boat** bobs in the waters like a cherry.
3. Life in these identical and cramped **rooms** is like life in a filing cabinet.
4. The falling bird gives energy to the passive and still **elements**.
5. The stretchy, pliable **willow** is appropriately named.

Lesson 2.6: Hyphenated Adjectives

Study these two examples:

- **example 1:** All about them whistles the cold and familiar **wind**.
- **example 2:** I see the blood-stained **blade** continue cutting weeds and shade.

In example 1, the two adjectives work independently. Both *cold* and *familiar* describe the wind. We could say *cold wind* and we could say *familiar wind*, thus separating the two adjective-noun relationships.

But in example 2, the word *blood* and the word *stained* do not work independently of one another. Though we could say that the blade is a *stained blade*, we could not call it a *blood blade*. In this sentence, *blood* can work as an adjective only when joined with *stained*.

Both examples are examples of compound adjectives—yet there is a difference between them. For this reason, we'll save the term *compound adjective* for those of the example A variety; we'll use the term **hyphenated adjective** to refer to those of the example B variety. Unlike the compound adjective, the hyphenated adjective works as one, single adjective.

Hyphenated adjectives may be longer than two words.

For example:

- This down-to-earth **speaker** was the most inspiring person I'd seen in a long time.

The hyphen (-) is mandatory in such constructions.

One more example:

- The solemn-eyed **child** is going away with us.

Are the two adjective words dependent on one another, or are they independent? We can find out by asking our key question *What kind of NOUN?*

- What kind of child? A *solemn* child.
- What kind of child? An *eyed* child.

Note that this time it's the second of the two words that fails the question-asking test above. The two words, therefore, are joined with a hyphen:

solemn-eyed child.

YOUR TURN 2.6

In the following sentences, determine which word pairs are hyphenated adjectives in need of a hyphen. Also determine the noun being described by the hyphenated adjective.

1. My two pointed ladder is sticking through a tree toward heaven still.
2. I offer my fearlessness to the deep diving trout.
3. God walked alone through the earth; for Him no heart built temple stood.
4. The spool of our engine driven fate unwinds, and our history now outpaces our thought.

ANSWERS 2.6

1. My two-pointed **ladder** is sticking through a tree toward heaven still.
2. I offer my fearlessness to the deep-diving **trout**.
3. God walked alone through the earth; for Him no heart-built **temple** stood.
4. The spool of our engine-driven **fate** unwinds, and our history now outpaces our thought.

Lesson 2.7: Two Exceptions

We have seen how two words that work together to describe a noun can be joined by a hyphen. We'll now look at two exceptions to using the hyphen.

Exception 1: The adjective moves from the left to the right

Hyphenated adjectives are hyphenated when they appear to the left of the nouns they describe. However, when those same hyphenated adjectives appear to the *right* of the nouns they describe, we “cancel” the hyphen.

Examples:

- I see the blood-stained **blade** continue cutting weeds and shade.
- The **blade** is blood stained.

In both sentences, *blood stained* describes the blade. In the first example the word pair appears to the left of *blade* and gets a hyphen; in the second example it appears to the right of *blade* and gets no hyphen. (The linking verb *is* makes this movement possible.)

Another example:

- The solemn-eyed **child** is going away with us.
- The **child** is solemn eyed.

In both sentences, *solemn eyed* describes the child. In the first example the word pair appears to the left of *child* and gets a hyphen; in the second example it appears to the right of *child* and gets no hyphen.

Exception 2: The adverb (or *-ly*) exception

- At last I apprehend the ocean's *invisibly fine* **spray**.

In the example above, it appears that the hyphenated adjective *invisibly fine* is describing the noun *spray*. Though it is true that the adjective *fine* is describing the noun *spray*, the left-hand word *invisibly* is an adverb describing the adjective *fine*. The three-word sequence of *invisibly fine spray* is a sequence of adverb, then adjective, then noun.

For this reason, we use no hyphen.

- The vibrations are masked by the *scarcely audible* **hush** of the rocky shore.

In the example above, it appears that the hyphenated adjective *scarcely audible* is describing the noun *hush*. However, *scarcely* is an adverb, focused only on describing the adjective *audible*.

In summary, pay attention. If we see what looks like a hyphenated adjective but the left-hand word is an *-ly* word, we need to verify whether that *-ly* word is an adjective or an adverb.

YOUR TURN 2.7

In the sentences that follow, first identify the compound adjective (or, more precisely, the two words that *appear* to be a compound adjective). Also identify the noun being described. Then decide whether the reason for not using a hyphen is Exception 1 (appearing to the right of the noun being described) or Exception 2 (the left-hand word is an *-ly* adverb).

Here are two examples:

- Could you tell if their **faces** were clean shaven?

Clean shaven describes the noun *faces*. However, *clean shaven* receives no hyphen because the two words appear to the right of the noun. This is Exception 1.

- These suddenly smudged **images** of consonance and peace continue to haunt us.

Suddenly smudged appears to describe the noun *images*. However, only *smudged* describes the noun *images*. *Suddenly* is an adverb describing the adjective *smudged*. This is Exception 2.

1. But it is the dark emptiness contained in every moment that seems to me the most singularly glorious gift. (No hyphen after the word _____ because of Exception [1 or 2].)
2. The hills we face are half forested and dry. (No hyphen after the word _____ because of Exception [1 or 2].)
3. I'll climb out, all seven of me, like a spider that is many legged. (No hyphen after the word _____ because of Exception [1 or 2].)
4. The appropriately helpless visitors feel dwarfed by the expansive prairie. (No hyphen after the word _____ because of Exception [1 or 2].)

ANSWERS 2.7

1. But it is the dark emptiness contained in every moment that seems to me the most singularly glorious gift. [No hyphen after the word **singularly** because of Exception 2.]
2. The hills we face are half forested and dry. [No hyphen after the word **half** because of Exception 1.]
3. I'll climb out, all seven of me, like a spider that is many legged. [No hyphen after the word **many** because of Exception 1.]
4. The appropriately helpless visitors feel dwarfed by the expansive prairie. [No hyphen after the word **appropriately** because of Exception 2.]

Lesson 2.8: Compound Adjectives to the Right of Nouns

Here is an earlier example of a basic adjective:

- A silver **spoon** from my childhood has returned unexpectedly.

We defined *basic* adjectives as single-word adjectives that appear to the left of nouns. Note that, in this example, trying to move the adjective *silver* to the right of the noun would result in an ungrammatical sentence:

- A **spoon** silver from my childhood has returned unexpectedly.

However, unlike single adjectives, compound adjectives *can* be moved to the right of nouns.

Example:

- The large and composed **cops** sweep glass and walk among the wrecks.
- The **cops**, large and composed, sweep glass and walk among the wrecks.
[*Most commonly, our compounding is accomplished with the conjunction “and.”*]

Note that in order to shift our compound adjective to the right, we need a pair of commas. Note also that the move-to-the-right device works when the two adjectives are joined by *and*, but not when joined by a comma.

One other thing to note. By shifting our compound adjective to the right of the noun being described, we gain a degree of elegance and stylishness. Appreciating such things as elegance and stylishness becomes easier as we develop a good ear for finely constructed sentences.

Another example:

- The shallow and yellowed **eyes** are packed with tarnished tinfoil.
- The **eyes**, shallow and yellowed, are packed with tarnished tinfoil.

Here, our elegance and stylishness are gained by moving the adjectives *shallow* and *yellowed* to the right of the noun *eyes*—along with a pair of commas.

YOUR TURN 2.8

Read each of the following sentences. Then, in your head, use your internal voice to create an alternative version of each sentence. The alternative version will be the same sentence, except that the compound adjective will appear to the right of the noun being described.

As you reach each of the two commas, draw out the pause. Here, you might want to speak the sentences out loud.

1. I'd rather smell of sweet and fragrant lilacs than of musty stench.
2. The watered and guarded flowers are harnessed to a pot of dirt.
3. The long and exhausted parades failed to prevent the atrocities.
4. Your heavy and tired legs continued to propel you forward.

ANSWERS 2.8

1. I'd rather smell of lilacs, sweet and fragrant, than of musty stench.
2. The flowers, watered and guarded, are harnessed to a pot of dirt.
3. The parades, long and exhausted, failed to prevent the atrocities.
4. Your legs, heavy and tired, continued to propel you forward.

Lesson 2.9: Nouns as Adjectives

Some nouns can convert to adjectives.

Bubble is a noun—it's a thing. By placing the noun *bubble* to the left of the noun *wrap*, we get *bubble wrap*. In this case, the word *bubble* has converted from a noun to an adjective. It is now describing the noun *wrap*.

Prison is a noun—it's a thing. By placing the noun *prison* to the left of the noun *bars*, we get *prison bars*. In this case, the word *prison* has converted from a noun to an adjective. It is now describing the noun *bars*.

Here is a test sentence that allows you to distinguish between true adjectives and nouns that have converted to adjectives:

- The adjective **noun** is very adjective. (The second adjective will be the same word as the first adjective.)

Let's see what happens when we apply our test sentence.

- The protective **wrap** keeps the contents safe.
- **test:** The protective **wrap** is very protective.

In this example, the test sentence makes sense. Therefore, *protective* is a true adjective.

Let's try another one.

- The bubble **wrap** keeps the contents safe.
- **test:** The bubble **wrap** is very bubble.

This test sentence does not work—it makes no sense. Therefore, *bubble* is not a true adjective. It is a noun moving into the adjective position to do the work of an adjective.

The following example contains a pair of adjective-noun word pairs.

- Kerouac sees a house **gambler** who tears his soft **heart** out.

Let's test each word pair:

- **test:** The house **gambler** is very house.
- **test:** The soft **heart** is very soft.

The first example does not work (does not make sense); the second example

does work; thus *house* is the noun-as-adjective and *soft* is the true adjective.

YOUR TURN 2.9

Each of the following sentences contains two pairs of adjective-noun combinations. One of the two adjectives is a true adjective; the other adjective is an ex-noun doing the work of an adjective. Using our test sentence (*the adjective noun is very adjective*), determine which is the true adjective and which is the noun-as-adjective.

In this Your Turn, the adjectives and nouns are marked for you.

1. The goblets keep their shape and the heavy **lid** of the soup **tureen** settles within its rim.
2. We feed their cold **emptiness** with fragrances of plum **blossoms**.
3. I have seen that my sensitive **soul** takes in every detail I can manage concerning the garden **wall** and its borders.
4. “Here are matches,” we say to the bodies in the icy **caverns**, huddled inside animal **skins**.

ANSWERS 2.9

1. The goblets keep their shape and the heavy **lid** of the soup **tureen** settles within its rim. [“heavy” = *true adjective*; “soup” = *noun-as-adjective*]
2. We feed their cold **emptiness** with fragrances of plum **blossoms**. [“cold” = *true adjective*; “plum” = *noun-as-adjective*]
3. I have seen that my sensitive **soul** takes in every detail I can manage concerning the garden **wall** and its borders. [“sensitive” = *true adjective*; “garden” = *noun-as-adjective*]
4. “Here are matches,” we say to the bodies in the icy **caverns**, huddled inside animal **skins**. [“icy” = *true adjective*; “animal” = *noun-as-adjective*]

Lesson 2.10: Possessives as Adjectives

In order to truly understand adjectives, we must focus not on the adjective but on the relationship between the adjective and the noun being described. In the four examples that follow, the left-hand adjective describes the right-hand noun:

- open → wound
- silver → spoon
- lovely → grain
- crushed → petals

The adjectives in these examples are doing their descriptive work in the space where the arrow appears. Each adjective is making a connection with its accompanying noun.

By focusing on that connection rather on the words themselves, we can more easily understand how possessives, too, function as adjectives. Let's look at two types of possessives: **possessive adjectives** and **possessive nouns**.

Possessive Adjectives

Possessive adjectives are pronouns that show possession or ownership. (The possessive pronouns—*mine*, *yours*, *his*, *hers*, *its*, *theirs*, *ours*—also show ownership, but these pronouns do not function as adjectives.)

Here are the seven possessive adjectives:

- *my*, *your*, *his*, *her*, *its*, *their*, *our*

Above, we saw how the nouns *wound*, *spoon*, *grain*, and *petals* can be described by adjectives. Here are those same nouns being described by possessive adjectives:

- my → wound
- your → spoon
- his → grain
- her → petals

Like adjectives, these possessive adjectives tell us something about the nouns

they point to.

Possessive Nouns

Possessive nouns are the words we create when we add an apostrophe + s to a noun. Adding apostrophe + s allows us to create such words as *astronaut's*, *baker's*, *cartoonist's*, and *daffodil's*. Once such words take the possessive form, they can do the work of adjectives, as in these examples:

- astronaut's → wound
- baker's → spoon
- cartoonist's → grain
- daffodil's → petals

The two sentences that follow contain one example of a possessive adjective doing the work of an adjective and one example of a possessive noun doing the work of an adjective:

- These borders we must cross separately, stamped with our **woes**.
- Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, and summer's **lease** hath all too short a date.

In the first example, the possessive adjective *our* describes the noun *woes*; in the second example the possessive noun *summer's* describes the noun *lease*.

YOUR TURN 2.10

For each of the following sentences, identify the possessive-word-plus-noun relationship and determine whether the possessive word is a possessive adjective or a possessive noun. The possessive adjectives are *my*, *your*, *his*, *her*, *its*, *their*, *our*.

1. A good name in man and woman is the immediate jewel of their souls.
2. Stark violence is still the sire of all the world's values.
3. The brown skin hung in strips, and its pattern of darker brown was like wallpaper.
4. The squirrel's granary is full, and the harvest is done.
5. There from the flowing bowl deep drinks the warrior's soul.
5. Not for joy the vulture spreads her sails on the air over the mountain.

ANSWERS 2.10

1. A good name in man and woman is the immediate jewel of their **souls**. [*“Their” is a possessive adjective.*]
2. Stark violence is still the sire of all the world’s **values**. [*“World’s” is a possessive noun.*]
3. The brown skin hung in strips, and its **pattern** of darker brown was like wallpaper. [*“Its” is a possessive adjective.*]
4. The squirrel’s **granary** is full, and the harvest is done. [*“Squirrel’s” is a possessive noun.*]
5. There from the flowing bowl deep drinks the warrior’s **soul**. [*“Warrior’s” is a possessive noun.*]
5. Not for joy the vulture spreads her **sails** on the air over the mountain. [*“Her” is a possessive adjective.*]

Lesson 2.11: Counting Adjectives

Some adjectives tell how many of a certain noun exists. Often, these **counting adjectives** will limit the number of the noun in question.

Here is a list of **counting adjectives**: *any, both, each, every, few, many, most, several, some*.

Numbers also serve as counting adjectives: *one* fish, *two* leaves, etc.

Examples:

- A few **leaves** lay on the starving sod.
- He has business in the Balkans and many **calls** to make this morning.

In these two examples, the counting adjective *few* tells how many leaves there are, and the counting adjective *many* tells how many calls there are.

YOUR TURN 2.11

For each of the following, identify the counting adjective and the noun being counted.

1. The bee moved one foreleg, feebly, as if old.
2. And some words played between us, which lost the more by our love.
3. May it be my custom to go outdoors each day among the trees and grasses.
4. Several windows appear to be made of tin or reflected light.
5. The whales need not mail their songs to any publishers.

ANSWERS 2.11

1. The bee moved one **foreleg**, feebly, as if old.
2. And some **words** played between us, which lost the more by our love.
3. May it be my custom to go outdoors each **day** among the trees and grasses.
4. Several **windows** appear to be made of tin or reflected light.
5. The whales need not mail their songs to any **publishers**.

Lesson 2.12: Comparative and Superlative

We use the **comparative** form when comparing two things; we use the **superlative** form when three or more things are being compared.

With one-syllable words, we (usually) form the comparative by adding *-er* and the superlative by adding *-est*; with words of two or more syllables, we (usually) form the comparative with the word *more* and the superlative with the word *most*. (The words *less* and *least* may also be used to make comparative and superlative comparisons.)

Some examples:

- **comparative:** I dwell in possibility, a fairer **house** than prose. (The fairness of the possibility house is being compared to the fairness of the prose house.)
- **superlative:** The deepest **truth** of all is that no one else can walk your journey for you. (Three or more truths are being compared.)
- **comparative:** This **night** is more marvelous than the dawn! (The marvelousness of the night is being compared to the marvelousness of the dawn.)
- **superlative:** Of the changing emotions, **glitter** is the most ridiculous. (Three or more emotions are being compared.)

Note: Comparative and superlative forms may appear to the left or to the right of the nouns being compared. For example, *the night is more marvelous* gives us a comparative form to the right of the noun.

YOUR TURN 2.12

For each of the following, identify the comparative or superlative adjective and determine whether that adjective is comparative or superlative. Also identify the noun being described or compared.

1. Let us evolve forever toward the higher consciousness of the machine.
2. On your lonely nights, I visit other planets and the most secret stars of all.
3. I needed to be humbled, cooked in the tears of loss, for any deeper life to emerge.
4. The fact is the sweetest dream that labor knows.
5. The inner terrain is often more rugged than any outer wilderness.
5. May your trails be crooked, leading to the most amazing view.

ANSWERS 2.12

1. Let us evolve forever toward the higher **consciousness** of the machine.
[comparative]
2. On your lonely nights, I visit other planets and the most secret **stars** of all.
[superlative]
3. I needed to be humbled, cooked in the tears of loss, for any deeper **life** to emerge. [comparative]
4. The fact is the sweetest **dream** that labor knows. [superlative]
5. The inner **terrain** is often more rugged than any outer wilderness.
[comparative]
5. May your trails be crooked, leading to the most amazing **view**.
[superlative]

Lesson 2.13: Participles

A **participle** is a verb used as an adjective. For example, *dangle* is a verb; it names an action we can perform. And *rip* is a verb; it, too, names an action we can perform. However, in the following example, both *dangle* and *rip* have been converted to adjectives:

- I am going to carry my bed into New York, complete with dangling **sheets** and ripped **blankets**.

In this sentence, *dangling* is a present participle and *ripped* is a past participle.

All present participles end with *-ing*.

Examples:

- pounding drums
- creaking wood

Most past participles end with *-ed*.

Examples:

- spoiled children
- quilted chairs

To fully understand participles, we need to see the double duty these words perform—we need to see both their verb-like and their adjective-like qualities.

Example:

- Pulsating **life** will rush in to make our bodies taut with power.

First we identify the participle-noun word pair, *pulsating life*. The *-ing* ending tells us that *pulsating* is a present participle. As a verb, *pulsating* is an action—to pulsate is to expand and contract with strong regular movements. As an adjective, *pulsating* describes the noun *life*.

Another example:

- The masked **vibrations** are scarcely audible.

Here, the *-ed* ending tells us that *masked* is a past participle. As a verb,

masked is an action—to mask is to conceal from view. As an adjective, *masked* describes the noun *vibrations*.

YOUR TURN 2.13

Our four-step thought process:

1. Identify the participle-noun word pair.
2. Determine whether the participle is past or present.
3. Identify the participle's verb-like qualities: What action does the word describe?
4. Identify what makes the participle an adjective: What noun does the participle describe?

Apply the four steps above to the sentences that follow. Each sentence contains one participle-noun word pair. Be careful with number 4.

1. The falling bird gives energy to the passive and still elements. [*The participle-noun pair? Past or present? Why verb-like? Describes what noun?*]
2. I offer my fearlessness to the diving trout. [*The participle-noun pair? Past or present? Why verb-like? Describes what noun?*]
3. The whistled tune could be heard far into the night. [*The participle-noun pair? Past or present? Why verb-like? Describes what noun?*]
4. The day is filled with omens and scattered blood. [*The participle-noun pair? Past or present? Why verb-like? Describes what noun?*]

ANSWERS 2.13

1. The falling bird gives energy to the passive and still elements. [(A) *falling bird* (B) *present* (C) *to fall is to move downward without control* (D) *falling describes the noun bird*]
2. I offer my fearlessness to the diving trout. [(A) *diving trout* (B) *present* (C) *to dive is to plunge downward into water* (D) *diving describes the noun trout*]
3. The whistled tune could be heard far into the night. [(A) *whistled tune* (B) *past* (C) *to whistle is to create a high-pitched sound by forcing air through a small opening in the lips* (D) *whistled describes the noun tune*]
4. The day is filled with omens and scattered blood. [(A) *scattered blood* (B) *past* (C) *to scatter is to spread out in random directions* (D) *scattered describes the noun blood*]

Lesson 2.14: Participial Phrases

In the previous exercise we learned that we create participles by taking verbs and using them as adjectives. In this lesson we will see how those one-word participles can be used to create **participial phrases**.

- **with a one-word participle:** The disturbed **friar** tossed his omelets for the people of the village.
- **converted to a participial phrase:** DISTURBED by the perpetual hunger he found there, the **friar** tossed his omelets for the people of the village. [*The participial phrase is underlined; the participle is in small caps.*]

Note how the participle *disturbed* describes the noun *friar*. When the participle becomes part of a longer phrase, this adjective-noun relationship does not change: the entire phrase still functions as if it were a one-word adjective describing the noun *friar*. Note also how, when we use a phrase rather than a single word, we punctuate with one or more commas.

Another example:

- **They** sing a song about their loneliness, WAVING their shirts about their heads.

Here, the participle *waving* describes the pronoun *they*. Note that once a participle becomes part of a participial phrase, it is free to move about. In the example above, *waving* describes *they* from quite a distance away. Note also that in most participial phrases the participle is the first word of the phrase.

YOUR TURN 2.14

In this Your Turn you will (A) identify the participial phrase, (B) the participle within the participial phrase, and (C) the noun or pronoun being described.

Example: **He** is unable to break free of the ice that holds him, FROZEN by the grasp of age.

- 1. the phrase: *frozen by the grasp of age*
- 3. the participle: *frozen* (*frozen* is irregular: it does not take the *-ed* ending)
- 2. the noun or pronoun being described: *he*

Apply the same three-step process to the sentences that follow. Pay attention to the commas as you do.

- 1. Rome lies in ruins, marked by the monuments that no one now remembers. [*The phrase? The participle? The noun being described?*]
- 2. Placing his soft hand over his mouth, he gathers the force needed to cry out. [*The phrase? The participle? The pronoun being described?*]
- 3. She works happily in the noonday sun, humming a song about wood and wheat. [*The phrase? The participle? The pronoun being described?*]
- 4. The road to the Basilica, flanked by a tourist booth and a wax museum, meanders into the distance. [*The phrase? The participle? The noun being described?*]

ANSWERS 2.14

1. **Rome** lies in ruins, MARKED by the monuments that no one now remembers.
2. PLACING his soft hand over his mouth, **he** gathers the force needed to cry out.
3. **She** works happily in the noonday sun, HUMMING a song about wood and wheat.
4. The **road** to the Basilica, FLANKED by a tourist booth and a wax museum, meanders into the distance.

General punctuation rule: When a participial phrase appears to the left or right side of a sentence, we use one comma; when a participial phrase appears within a sentence, we use two commas.

Lesson 2.15: Relative Clauses

Relative clauses begin with **relative pronouns** (*who*, *that*, *which*) and do the work of adjectives. For our study of relative clauses, we'll learn four relative clause configurations:

1. people, no commas
2. people, with commas
3. things, no commas
4. things, with commas

Structure 1: People, No Commas [*who*]

Relative clauses follow nouns; they provide information about the nouns they follow. *Stranger* is a noun; *stranger* is also a person. A relative clause that follows *stranger* must begin with the relative pronoun *who*.

For example:

- Give back your heart to the **stranger** who has loved you all your life. [*In this example and those that follow, **relative clauses** are underlined; **relative pronouns** are in small caps; nouns being described are boldfaced.*]

Here, the relative clause *who has loved you all your life* follows the noun *stranger* and provides information about the noun *stranger*. It is a clause because it has a subject (*who*) and a verb (*has loved*).

Structure 2: People, with Commas [*who*]

- Give back your heart to the **stranger**, who has loved you all your life.

We have seen two versions of the same sentence—this version with a strong pause and the previous version without. We'll return to the difference between these two sentences shortly.

Structure 3: Things, No Commas [*that*]

Blizzard is a noun; *blizzard* is also a thing. A **relative clause** that follows *blizzard* without a comma must begin with the **relative pronoun** *that*.

For example:

- Katrina remembers the **blizzard** THAT burst on those other children.

Here, the relative clause *that burst on those other children* follows the noun *blizzard* and provides information about the noun *blizzard*. It is a clause because it has a subject (*that*) and a verb (*burst*).

Structure 4: Things, with Commas [*which*]

Fate is a noun; *fate* is also a thing. A **relative clause** that follows *fate* with commas must begin with the **relative pronoun** *which*.

For example:

- My **fate**, which will be decided by the sword of Ajax, brought me here to this shore.

Here, the relative clause *which will be decided by the sword of Ajax* follows the noun *fate* and provides information about the noun *fate*. It is a clause because it has a subject (*which*) and a verb (*will be decided*).

Rules for Relative Pronouns

By using the examples above and working inductively, we can form these rules about the three relative pronouns:

- *Who* is used with people; it can appear with or without commas.
- *That* is used with things—without commas.
- *Which* is used with things—with commas.

The Commas Matter

Relative clauses can appear with or without commas. Those that do appear with commas will be punctuated with either one or two commas, as in these examples from above.

- Give back your heart to the **stranger**, who has loved you all your life. [1 comma]
- My **fate**, which will be decided by the sword of Ajax, brought me here to this shore. [2 commas]

By once again working inductively, we can determine that a relative clause appearing at the end of a sentence receives one comma, while a relative

clause appearing mid-sentence receives two commas.

But the real difference lies between those relative clauses that receive commas and those that don't. The comma-less relative clauses are known as **restrictive relative clauses**; the relative clauses with commas are known as **nonrestrictive relative clauses**. To understand the difference between the two, study these two sentences:

- Give back your heart to the **stranger** who has loved you all your life.
[restrictive]
- Give back your heart to the **stranger**, who has loved you all your life.
[nonrestrictive]

In the first example, there is a group of strangers—but only one of them has loved you all your life. The relative clause *restricts* the larger group of strangers to a smaller group: just the one stranger who has loved you all your life. The other strangers, perhaps, could care less about you.

In the second example, there is only one stranger. Both the speaker and the receiver of this request know exactly who “the stranger” is. The focus, instead, is on the information contained within the relative clause—the fact that the stranger *has loved you all your life*.

To further drive home the difference created by the comma (or lack of a comma), here are two more examples:

- The **secretaries** who are sitting near the open window are more likely to hear the song of the chickadee. [restrictive]
- **Lars Thorketill**, who moved to the mountains, rests in the grace of the world and is free. [nonrestrictive]

The *stranger who loved you* example we saw earlier could appear with a comma or without. But with these two examples, no such choice exists. In the first example, it is clear that there exists a larger group of secretaries and that the relative clause is *restricting* that larger group to a smaller group—only those who are sitting near the open window. In the second example, there is only one Lars Thorketill. The commas are correct because the sentence wants us to focus on the information being presented; there is no larger group of Lars Thorketills to be restricted.

And all that we've learned about the difference between *who* with commas

and *who* without commas applies to the difference between *that* and *which*—*that* is always restrictive (no commas); *which* is always nonrestrictive (yes commas).

YOUR TURN 2.15

For each of the following sentences, answer three questions:

1. What is the relative clause?
2. What is the relative pronoun? (It will be the first word of the relative clause.)
3. What noun is the relative clause describing? (It will appear immediately to the left of the relative pronoun.)

Example: The life-giving **water** THAT I have never drunk comes to me through secret aqueducts.

In the sentence above, the clause is (A) *that I have never drunk*; the relative pronoun is (B) *that*; the noun being described is (C) *water*.

1. I come into the peace of wild things, who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief.
2. In the Prell Shampoo commercial, a man's hand drops a pearl, which slowly sinks through the green murk.
3. It is the truth that can burn through the mists of confusion and fear.
4. I looked to find a man who walked like the translated patriarchs of old.

ANSWERS 2.15

1. I come into the peace of wild **things**, WHO do not tax their lives with forethought of grief.
2. In the Prell Shampoo commercial, a man's hand drops a **pearl**, WHICH slowly sinks through the green murk.
3. It is the **truth** THAT can burn through the mists of confusion and fear.
4. I looked to find a **man** WHO walked like the translated patriarchs of old.

Adjectives—Glossary of Terms

adjective suffix: A word part added to the end of a word. The word part creates the adjective, and it can also be used to identify (mark) the adjective. Some adjective suffixes: *-able/-ible*; *-al*; *-an/-ian*; *-en*; *-ful*; *-ic*; *-ive*; *-less*; *-ous*; *-y*.

adjectives: words that describe nouns

basic adjective: A one-word adjective sitting to the left of the noun it is describing. In the two-word combinations *open* wound, *silver* spoon, *lovely* grain, and *red* rose, the italicized words are basic adjectives describing the nouns to their right.

comparative: An adjective form used in comparing two things, usually with an *-er* ending or with the word *more*. In *this rose is redder than that one* and *that rose is more fragrant than this one*, the two comparative forms are *redder* and *more fragrant*.

compound adjective: Two (or more) adjectives describing the same noun. Compound adjectives may appear with a conjunction (*cold* and *familiar* wind) or with a comma (*cold, familiar* wind). Compound adjectives may also appear to the right of the nouns they describe (the wind, *cold* and *familiar*).

counting adjective: Adjectives that earn their adjective status by telling us how many of a noun there is. Included in the counting adjective group are numbers and words like *any*, *both*, *each*, *every*, *few*, *many*, *most*, *several*, *some*, *one*, *two*, *three*, etc.

hyphenated adjective: A type of compound adjective consisting of two or more words. In a compound adjective, the words within the adjective do not work independently of one another and, therefore, must be hyphenated to show that they are connected as a unit (*blood-stained* blade and *solemn-eyed* child). However, we don't hyphenate when the adjective moves to the right of the noun (*the blade is blood stained* or when the left-hand word is an *-ly* adverb (*scarcely audible hush*)).

linking verb: A type of verb that allows adjectives to move to the right of the nouns they describe. In the phrase *spoon is silver*, the linking verb *is* allows the adjective *silver* to move to the right side of *spoon*. Linking verbs include

the following: *is, am, are, was, were, appears, becomes, feels, grows, looks, seems, smells, sounds, tastes.*

nonrestrictive relative clause: A relative clause that begins with *who* or *that* and is not punctuated with a comma. In the following examples, the nonrestrictive relative clause is underlined: *man who sings in the shower; house that was built on the sand.* These clauses function as adjectives. In the two examples, the two clauses describe the nouns *man* and *house*.

participial phrase: A word group that is built from a participle and that functions as an adjective. For example, the participial phrase *singing in the shower* can describe the noun *man* and the participial phrase *sitting on the sand* can describe the noun *house*.

participle: A verb used as an adjective. *To creak* is an action, thus *creak* is normally a verb, but when used in a phrase like *creaking wood*, the word *creaking* has been transformed into an adjective. *To quilt* is an action, but when used in a phrase like *quilted chair*, the word *quilted* has been transformed into an adjective. In these two examples, *creaking* and *quilted* are participles.

past participle: Most past participles end in *-ed*. In the phrase *quilted chair*, *quilted* is an example of a past participle describing the noun *chair*.

possessive adjective: Pronouns that show possession or ownership: *my, your, his, her, its, their, our*. In the phrase *your baker*, the possessive adjective *your* describes the noun *baker*.

possessive noun: The words we create when we add an apostrophe + *s* to a noun: *astronaut's, baker's*. In the phrases *astronaut's wound* and *baker's spoon*, the two possessive nouns are functioning as adjectives describing the nouns *wound* and *spoon*.

predicate adjective: Adjectives that appear to the right of nouns with the help of linking verbs. Given the adjective-noun combination *silver spoon*, we can move the adjective *silver* to the right of the noun *spoon* with the help of the linking verb *is*: *the spoon is silver*.

present participle: Present participles end in *-ing*. In the phrase *creaking wood*, *creaking* is an example of a present participle describing the noun *wood*.

proper adjective: Proper adjectives begin as proper nouns, which are capitalized specific names for things—*Japan* and *Isaac Newton*, for example. From these proper nouns we can create proper adjectives: *Japan* can become *Japanese* and describe nouns like *kites*; *Isaac Newton* can become *Newtonian* and describe nouns like *physics*.

relative clause: A word group containing a subject and verb and functioning as an adjective. In the word group *the hat, which fit the tortoise perfectly*, the relative clause *which fit the tortoise perfectly* describes the noun *hat*. In the word group *the tortoise that raced around the corner*, the relative clause *that raced around the corner* describes the noun *tortoise*.

relative pronoun: Words that begin relative clauses—words such as *who*, *that*, *which*, *whom*, and *whose*.

restrictive relative clause: A relative clause that begins with *who* or *that* and is not punctuated with a comma. In the following examples, the nonrestrictive relative clause is underlined: *man who sings in the shower*; *house that was built on the sand*. These clauses function as adjectives. In the two examples, the two clauses describe the nouns *man* and *house*.

superlative: An adjective form used in comparing three or more things, usually with an *-est* ending or with the word *most*. In *this rose is the reddest* and *that rose is the most fragrant*, the two superlative forms are *reddest* and *most fragrant*.

Chapter 3: Test Questions

The questions you will encounter below test skills and knowledge drawn from Chapters 1 and 2. Noun questions and adjective questions are combined together. To do well on the test questions, you will need to identify the following. If you would like to brush up on any of the terms listed below, the lesson numbers are listed to the right of the terms.

- appositive: 1.11
- comparative adjective: 2.12
- compound adjective: 2.8
- counting adjective: 2.11
- gerund phrase: 1.10
- hyphenated adjective in need of a hyphen: 2.6 – 2.7
- noun as the object of a preposition: 1.8
- noun clause: 1.12
- noun serving as an adjective: 2.9
- participial phrase: 2.14
- participle serving as an adjective: 2.13
- possessive adjective: 2.10
- possessive noun: 1.7
- predicate adjective: 2.4
- proper adjective: 2.3
- proper noun: 1.6
- relative clause: 2.15
- superlative adjective: 2.12

For each test sentence, the first thing we should do—before we even look at the multiple-choice options—is to perform our own analysis of the sentence. We should identify the nouns, the adjectives, and any relevant phrases or clauses appearing within the sentence. Once we’ve done that, *then* we can read the multiple-choice options.

The test questions consist of twenty-four sentences grouped into sections of three sentences each. The question being asked for all twenty-four sentences

is the same:

- *Which of the following appear in this sentence?*

Some notes:

For convenience, the following word lists appear within the eight test sections for which they are relevant: counting adjectives, linking verbs (to help with predicate adjectives), noun clause markers, possessive adjectives, prepositions, and relative pronouns (the first words of relative clauses).

One of the options you will encounter is *a hyphenated adjective in need of a hyphen*. This forces you to identify the words themselves as opposed to simply hunting for a hyphen.

The Answers sections follow these conventions:

- Nouns are boldfaced.
- Adjectives are underlined.
- Relevant phrases and clauses are bracketed.
- The first words of participial phrases, gerund phrases, relative clauses, and relevant linking verbs are set in small caps.
- All answer choices get used at least once within each test section.

Good luck!

TEST PART 1

counting adjectives: *any, both, each, every, few, many, most, several, some, one, two, three, etc.*

noun clause markers: *that, if, whether, how, what, when, where, whom, why, however, whatever, whenever, wherever, whichever, whoever, whomever*

possessive adjectives: *my, your, his, her, its, their, our*

linking verbs: *is, am, are, was, were, appears, becomes, feels, grows, looks, seems, smells, sounds, tastes*

1. *A few leaves lay on the starving sod.* Which of the following are found in this sentence? CHOOSE TWO (A) a counting adjective (B) a noun clause (C) a noun serving as an adjective (D) a participle serving as an adjective (E) a possessive adjective (F) a predicate adjective
2. *Tom grew thoughtful when he considered that he was lucky to have friends.* CHOOSE TWO (A) a counting adjective (B) a noun clause (C) a noun serving as an adjective (D) a participle serving as an adjective (E) a possessive adjective (F) a predicate adjective
3. *But seaweed hair hides its smile.* CHOOSE TWO (A) a counting adjective (B) a noun clause (C) a noun serving as an adjective (D) a participle serving as an adjective (E) a possessive adjective (F) a predicate adjective

TEST ANSWERS PART 1

1. A few **leaves** lay on the starving **sod**.

(A) The counting adjective *few* describes the noun *leaves*.

(D) The present participle *starving* describes the noun *sod*.

2. **Tom** GREW thoughtful when he considered [THAT he WAS lucky to have **friends**].

(B) *That he was lucky to have friends* is a noun clause beginning with the noun-clause marker *that* (*when he considered SOMETHING*).

(F) The predicate adjective *thoughtful* describes the noun *Tom* from the right side of the linking verb *grew*; the predicate adjective *lucky* describes the pronoun *he* from the right side of the linking verb *was*.

3. But seaweed **hair** hides its **smile**.

(C) The noun *seaweed* is doing the adjective work of describing the noun *hair*.

(E) The possessive adjective *its* describes the noun *smile*.

TEST PART 2

prepositions: *above, across, against, among, at, before, behind, below, between, by, down, except, for, from, in, into, like, of, on, past, since, through, to, under, until, with*

noun clause markers: *that, if, whether, how, what, when, where, whom, why, however, whatever, whenever, wherever, whichever, whoever, whomever*

possessive adjectives: *my, your, his, her, its, their, our*

4. *Finding a needle in a haystack is our goal.* CHOOSE THREE (A) a gerund phrase (B) a noun as the object of a preposition (C) a noun clause (D) a possessive adjective (E) a possessive noun
5. *Black horses drive a mower through the weeds.* CHOOSE ONE (A) a gerund phrase (B) a noun as the object of a preposition (C) a noun clause (D) a possessive adjective (E) a possessive noun
5. *Hank's guitar goes wherever the tour bus takes it.* CHOOSE TWO (A) a gerund phrase (B) a noun as the object of a preposition (C) a noun clause (D) a possessive adjective (E) a possessive noun

TEST ANSWERS PART 2

4. [*FINDING a **needle** (in a **haystack**)*] is our **goal**.

(A) *Finding a needle in a haystack* is a gerund phrase (*SOMETHING is our goal*) beginning with the gerund noun *finding*.

(B) The noun *haystack* is the object of the preposition *in*. (Note the prepositional phrase contained within the gerund phrase.)

(D) The possessive adjective *our* describes the noun *goal*.

5. Black **horses** drive a **mower** [*through the **weeds***].

(B) The noun *weeds* is the object of the preposition *through*.

5. Hank's **guitar** goes [*WHEREVER the tour **bus** takes it*].

(C) *Wherever the tour bus takes it* is a noun clause beginning with the noun-clause marker *wherever* (*Hank's guitar goes SOMEWHERE*.)

(E) The possessive noun *Hank's* describes the noun *guitar*.

TEST PART 3

prepositions: *above, across, against, among, at, before, behind, below, between, by, down, except, for, from, in, into, like, of, on, past, since, through, to, under, until, with*

linking verbs: *is, am, are, was, were, appears, becomes, feels, grows, looks, seems, smells, sounds, tastes*

7. *That young and sturdy tree there among the flowers is Africa.* **CHOOSE THREE** (A) a compound adjective (B) a noun as the object of a preposition (C) a participial phrase (D) a predicate adjective (E) a proper adjective (F) a proper noun
3. *This university teaches the appeals of Aristotelian rhetoric.* **CHOOSE TWO** (A) a compound adjective (B) a noun as the object of a preposition (C) a participial phrase (D) a predicate adjective (E) a proper adjective (F) a proper noun
9. *Abandoned by his senses, Gerald grew frightened.* **CHOOSE FOUR** (A) a compound adjective (B) a noun as the object of a preposition (C) a participial phrase (D) a predicate adjective (E) a proper adjective (F) a proper noun

TEST ANSWERS PART 3

7. The young and sturdy **tree** there [among the **flowers**] is **Africa**.

(A) The compound adjective *young* and *sturdy* describes the noun *tree*.

(B) The noun *flowers* is the object of the preposition *among*.

(F) *Africa* is a proper noun.

3. The **university** teaches the **appeals** [of Aristotelian **rhetoric**].

(B) The noun *rhetoric* is the object of the preposition *of*.

(E) *Aristotelian* is a proper adjective.

3. [ABANDONED (by his **senses**)], **Gerald** GREW frightened.

(B) The noun *senses* is the object of the preposition *by*. (Note the prepositional phrase contained within the participial phrase.)

(C) The participial phrase *abandoned by his senses* begins with the past participle *abandoned* and describes the noun *Gerald*.

(D) The predicate adjective *frightened* describes the noun *Gerald* from the right side of the linking verb *grew*.

(F) *Gerald* is a proper noun.

TEST PART 4

counting adjectives: *any, both, each, every, few, many, most, several, some, one, two, three, etc.*

prepositions: *above, across, against, among, at, before, behind, below, between, by, down, except, for, from, in, into, like, of, on, past, since, through, to, under, until, with*

relative pronouns: *who, that, which*

10. *Archie looked at the box, which held ten marbles.* CHOOSE FOUR (A) an appositive (B) a counting adjective (C) a hyphenated adjective in need of a hyphen (D) a noun serving as an adjective (E) a noun as the object of a preposition (F) a proper noun (G) a relative clause (H) a superlative adjective
11. *Paws for Refreshment, a cat friendly restaurant, will open in November.* CHOOSE FOUR (A) an appositive (B) a counting adjective (C) a hyphenated adjective in need of a hyphen (D) a noun serving as an adjective (E) a noun as the object of a preposition (F) a proper noun (G) a relative clause (H) a superlative adjective
12. *They have confronted sea bottoms and stayed under fifty tons of the bluest ice.* CHOOSE FOUR (A) an appositive (B) a counting adjective (C) a hyphenated adjective in need of a hyphen (D) a noun serving as an adjective (E) a noun as the object of a preposition (F) a proper noun (G) a relative clause (H) a superlative adjective

TEST ANSWERS PART 4

10. *Archie* looked [at the **box**], *which* held ten **marbles**.

(B) The counting adjective *ten* describes the noun *marbles*.

(E) The noun *box* is the object of the preposition *at*.

(F) *Archie* is a proper noun.

(G) *Which held ten marbles* is a nonrestrictive relative clause beginning with the relative pronoun *which* and describing the noun *box*.

11. *Paws for Refreshment*, a cat-friendly **restaurant**, will open [in **November**].

(A) The appositive *a cat-friendly restaurant* renames the antecedent *Paws for Refreshment*.

(C) The hyphenated adjective *cat-friendly* (now with its hyphen in place) describes the noun *restaurant*.

(E) The noun *November* is the object of the preposition *in*.

(F) *Paws for Refreshment* is a three-word proper noun; *November* is a proper noun.

12. *They have confronted* sea **bottoms** and stayed [under fifty **tons**] [of the bluest **ice**].

(B) The counting adjective *fifty* describes the noun *tons*.

(D) The noun *sea* is doing the adjective work of describing the noun *bottoms*.

(E) The noun *tons* is the object of the preposition *under*; the noun *ice* is the object of the preposition *of*.

(H) The superlative adjective *bluest* describes the noun *ice*.

TEST PART 5

counting adjectives: *any, both, each, every, few, many, most, several, some, one, two, three, etc.*

possessive adjectives: *my, your, his, her, its, their, our*

linking verbs: *is, am, are, was, were, appears, becomes, feels, grows, looks, seems, smells, sounds, tastes*

relative pronouns: *who, that, which*

3. *But Andrew still has days when he looks unhappy.* CHOOSE TWO (A) a counting adjective (B) a gerund phrase (C) a possessive adjective (D) a predicate adjective (E) a proper noun (F) a relative clause
4. *Your cousin appreciates my offering him this opportunity* CHOOSE TWO (A) a counting adjective (B) a gerund phrase (C) a possessive adjective (D) a predicate adjective (E) a proper noun (F) a relative clause
5. *He was saved by the arrival of some soldiers, who held their muskets on their shoulders.* CHOOSE THREE (A) a counting adjective (B) a gerund phrase (C) a possessive adjective (D) a predicate adjective (E) a proper noun (F) a relative clause

TEST ANSWERS PART 5

3. But **Andrew** still has **days** when he LOOKS unhappy.

(D) The predicate adjective *unhappy* describes the pronoun *he* from the right side of the linking verb *looks*.

(E) *Andrew* is a proper noun.

4. Your **cousin** appreciates my [OFFERING him the **opportunity**].

(B) *Offering him the opportunity* is a gerund phrase, marked by the possessive adjective *my* and beginning with the gerund noun *offering*.

(C) The possessive adjective *your* describes the noun *cousin*; the possessive adjective *my* describes both the gerund noun *offering* and the complete gerund phrase *offering him the opportunity*.

5. He was saved by the **arrival** of some **soldiers**, WHO held their **muskets** on their **shoulders**.

(A) The counting adjective *some* describes the noun *soldiers*.

(C) The possessive adjective *their* describes the noun *muskets*; the possessive adjective *their* describes the noun *shoulders*.

(F) *Who held their muskets on their shoulders* is a nonrestrictive relative clause beginning with the relative pronoun *who* and describing the noun *soldiers*.

TEST PART 6

noun clause markers: *that, if, whether, how, what, when, where, whom, why, however, whatever, whenever, wherever, whichever, whoever, whomever*

linking verbs: *is, am, are, was, were, appears, becomes, feels, grows, looks, seems, smells, sounds, tastes*

6. *She still believed that it was possible to be festive without snow on the ground.* **CHOOSE TWO** (A) a hyphenated adjective in need of a hyphen (B) a noun clause (C) a predicate adjective
7. *His attempts at a joke appear ugly in her eyes.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) a hyphenated adjective in need of a hyphen (B) a noun clause (C) a predicate adjective
8. *I see the blood stained blade continue cutting weeds and shade.* **CHOOSE ONE** (A) a hyphenated adjective in need of a hyphen (B) a noun clause (C) a predicate adjective

TEST ANSWERS PART 6

6. *She still believed [THAT it WAS possible to be festive without **snow** on the **ground**].*

(B) The noun clause *that it was possible to be festive without snow on the ground* begins with the noun-clause marker *that* (*she still believed SOMETHING*).

(C) The predicate adjective *possible* describes the pronoun *it* from the right side of the linking verb *was*.

7. *His **attempts** at a **joke** APPEAR ugly in her **eyes**.*

(C) The predicate adjective *ugly* describes the noun *joke* from the right side of the linking verb *appear*.

8. *I see the blood-stained **blade** continue cutting **weeds** and **shade**.*

(A) The hyphenated adjective *blood-stained* (now with its hyphen in place) describes the noun *blade*.

TEST PART 7

9. *Measuring stations pick up soil in the Hawaiian air when ploughing time comes.* CHOOSE TWO (A) a comparative adjective (B) a compound adjective (C) a participial phrase (D) a participle serving as an adjective (E) a proper adjective
10. *The young men come in, and with them is a girl, pure and beautiful.* CHOOSE ONE (A) a comparative adjective (B) a compound adjective (C) a participial phrase (D) a participle serving as an adjective (E) a proper adjective
11. *Again he reached into the pile, hoping to find a smoother rock.* CHOOSE TWO (A) a comparative adjective (B) a compound adjective (C) a participial phrase (D) a participle serving as an adjective (E) a proper adjective

TEST ANSWERS PART 7

9. *Measuring **stations** pick up **soil** in the Hawaiian **air** when ploughing **time** comes.*

(D) The present participle *measuring* describes the noun *stations*; the present participle *ploughing* describes the noun *time*.

(E) The proper adjective *Hawaiian* describes the noun *air*.

10. *The young **men** come in, and with them is a **girl**, pure and beautiful.*

(B) The compound adjective *pure* and *beautiful* describes the noun *girl*—from the right side of *girl*.

11. *Again he reached into the **pile**, [HOPING to find a smoother **rock**].*

(A) The comparative adjective *smoother* describes the noun *rock*.

(C) The participial phrase *hoping to find a smoother rock* begins with the present participle *hoping* and describes the pronoun *he*.

TEST PART 8

counting adjectives: *any, both, each, every, few, many, most, several, some, one, two, three, etc.*

- !2. *In the meadows I met a lady, a fairy's child.* CHOOSE TWO (A) an appositive (B) a counting adjective (C) a non-possessive noun serving as an adjective (D) a participle serving as an adjective (E) a possessive noun
- !3. *Several windows appear to be made of tin or reflected light.* CHOOSE TWO (A) an appositive (B) a counting adjective (C) a non-possessive noun serving as an adjective (D) a participle serving as an adjective (E) a possessive noun
- !4. *Tomorrow we shall find a carrot leaf in the grass.* CHOOSE ONE (A) an appositive (B) a counting adjective (C) a non-possessive noun serving as an adjective (D) a participle serving as an adjective (E) a possessive noun

TEST ANSWERS PART 8

2. In the **meadows** I met a **lady**, [*a fairy's child*].

(A) The appositive *a fairy's child* renames the antecedent *lady*.

(E) The possessive noun *fairy's* describes the noun *child*.

3. Several **windows** appear to be made of **tin** or reflected **light**.

(B) The counting adjective *several* describes the noun *windows*.

(D) The past participle *reflected* describes the noun *light*.

4. **Tomorrow** we shall find a carrot **leaf** in the **grass**.

(C) The noun *carrot* is doing the adjective work of describing the noun *leaf*.

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